

Amendments to the Drawings:

Please replace the current drawings with the enclosed three sheets replacement drawings. No figures have been added or cancelled by this replacement.

Remarks

In response to the Office Action dated March 14, 2006, Applicants provide the following remarks to address the issues cited by the Examiner.

Status of the Claims

By this amendment, claims 9 and 12-16 have been amended, claims 19-20 have been added and no claims have been cancelled; therefore, claims 9-20 are currently pending in the present application. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been introduced by this amendment, as support therefor is found throughout the specification and drawings. In view of the above amendment and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that claims 9-20 are allowable.

Objection to the Drawings

Replacement sheets of drawings are submitted herewith to address issues cited by the Examiner with respect to the originally filed drawings. No new matter has been introduced via the replacement sheets of drawings.

Substance of Interview

Applicants cordially thank the Examiner for the telephonic interview of May 9, 2007 to clarify the objections to the drawings presented in the Office Action of March 14, 2007. Specifically, the Office Action Summary indicated drawing objections, however, the objections were not explained in the contents of the Office Action. During the interview, the Examiner explained that Figures 3 and 4 contained multiple annotations directed to the same region, which required correction. Accordingly, replacement sheets of drawings are submitted herewith to correct the noted informalities.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(e)

Claims 9-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Diaz et al. (U.S. 6,938,488) (Hereinafter referred to as Diaz). The Examiner's grounds for rejection are hereinafter traversed, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The present invention is an ultrasonic apparatus for inspecting a work piece, for example, a spot weld joint between adjacent sheet metal plates. To begin the inspection, the coupling to the work piece must be optimized. This task is performed by moving the probe in at least two solid angles, which thereby optimizes coupling and echo sequences. Hence, the apparatus of the claimed invention is designed to allow for the varying of the angle under which the coupling to the entrance surface is performed in at least two solid angles; to accomplish this, the probe must be moved in at least two solid angles relative to the entrance face of the work piece. In stark contrast, the apparatus shown and described in Diaz does not require or enable the optimization of the coupling angle to the work piece under inspection, as the coupling angle is always 90 degrees to the entrance face of the work piece. Therefore, Diaz does not teach, enable or otherwise suggest an ultrasonic inspection apparatus for non-destructive inspection of a work piece including a probe comprising a couplant that allows for varying the angle under which the coupling to the entrance surface is performed in at least two solid angles. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Regarding newly added claims 19-20, both claims incorporate the distinguishing feature that the probe is movable in at least two solid angles relative to the work piece and are believed to be allowable for at least the reasons discussed in connection with claims 9-16.

Conclusion

It is respectfully submitted that claims 9-20 are allowable for at least the abovementioned Reasons. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early action to that effect is earnestly solicited.

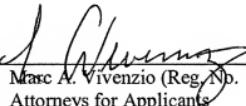
If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicants' attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is cordially requested to telephone the undersigned.

It is believed that a three-month extension of time is required with this paper. Accordingly, a petition for said extension and required fee are enclosed herewith.

In the event of a fee deficiency or if a petition for an extension of time is required in addition to that submitted herewith, please consider this a petition for an extension of time therefor, and authorization for the Commissioner to charge any additional fees, including extension fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-3569.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: October 16, 2007

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